

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:  
attempting to authorize a call from a user made to a number;  
routing the call, after the call is authorized, to a remote location; and  
setting up call signaling at the remote location between the user and a destination of the call so that media content of the call flows between the user and the destination but not through the remote location.
2. The method of claim 1 further comprising collecting information related to the user to be used in authorizing the user.
3. The method of claim 1 further comprising verifying the validity of the destination.
4. The method of claim 1 further comprising tracking usage of a calling card used by the user to make the call.
5. The method of claim 1 further comprising streaming the media content from the user and to the destination after the call signaling is set up.
6. The method of claim 1 in which the call signaling uses an H.323 routing protocol.
7. The method of claim 1 in which the call signaling uses a session initiation protocol.
8. An article comprising a machine-readable medium which contains machine-executable instructions, the instructions causing a machine to:

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FOOTNOTES

attempt to authorize a call from a user made to a number;  
route the call, after the call is authorized, to a remote  
location; and

set up call signaling at the remote location between the user and a destination of the call so that media content of the call flows between the user and the destination but not through the remote location.

9. The article of claim 8 further causing a machine to collect information related to the user to be used in authorizing the user.

10. The article of claim 8 further causing a machine to verify the validity of the destination.

11. The article of claim 8 further causing a machine to track usage of a calling card used by the user to make the call.

12. The article of claim 8 further causing a machine to stream the media content from the user and to the destination after the call signaling is set up.

13. The article of claim 8 in which the call signaling uses an H.323 routing protocol.

14. The article of claim 8 in which the call signaling uses a session initiation protocol.

15. A system comprising:

- an authorization mechanism configured to attempt to authorize a call from a user made to a number; and
- a proxy server configured to route the call, after the call is authorized by the authorization mechanism, to a remote server included at a location remote from the authorization

mechanism and configured to set up call signaling between the user and a destination of the call so that media content of the call flows between the user and the destination but not through the location.

16. The system of claim 15 further comprising an inbound mechanism configured to receive the call and to communicate with the authorization mechanism.

17. The system of claim 15 further comprising an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) mechanism configured to collect information related to the user to be used in authorizing the user.

18. The system of claim 15 further comprising a plurality of Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) mechanisms, each of the plurality of VOIP mechanisms configured to receive a call made to a different number.

19. The system of claim 15 in which the remote server is also configured to verify the validity of the destination.

20. The system of claim 15 in which the remote server is also configured to track usage of a calling card used by the user to make the call.

21. The system of claim 15 further comprising a gateway mechanism configured to stream the media content from the user and to the destination after the remote server sets up the call signaling.

22. The system of claim 15 in which the proxy server sets up the call signaling using an H.323 routing protocol.

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23. The system of claim 15 in which the proxy server sets up the call signaling using a session initiation protocol.

24. The system of claim 15 in which the user makes the call using a calling card.

25. A system comprising:

an inbound gateway mechanism configured to receive a Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) call made by a user across a network;

a gathering mechanism configured to communicate with the inbound gateway mechanism and to gather information related to the VOIP call from the user;

an authentication mechanism configured to authenticate the user based at least on the information and on stored information accessible by the authentication mechanism;

an outbound gateway mechanism configured to communicate with a destination of the VOIP call; and

a server mechanism configured to, once the authentication mechanism authenticates the user, set up call signaling with the inbound gateway mechanism, to set up call signaling with the outbound gateway mechanism, and to instruct the inbound gateway mechanism and the outbound gateway mechanism to stream media content related to the VOIP call to each other.

26. The system of claim 25 further comprising

an inbound network including the inbound gateway mechanism and the gathering mechanism, and

an outbound network at a remote location from the inbound network and including the outbound gateway mechanism.

27. The system of claim 26 in which the inbound network also includes the authentication mechanism.

28. The system of claim 26 further comprising a customer network at a location remote from the inbound network and the outbound network and including the authentication mechanism.

29. The system of claim 25 further comprising an inbound proxy mechanism located between the inbound gateway mechanism and the server mechanism and configured to communicate with the inbound gateway mechanism and with the server mechanism.

30. The system of claim 25 further comprising an outbound proxy mechanism located between the outbound gateway mechanism and the server mechanism and configured to communicate with the outbound gateway mechanism and with the server mechanism.

31. The system of claim 25 in which the gathering mechanism includes an interactive voice response mechanism.

32. The system of claim 25 in which the authentication mechanism includes a radius server.

33. The system of claim 25 in which the server mechanism is also configured to maintain control of the VOIP call while the inbound gateway mechanism and the outbound gateway mechanism stream the media content to each other.

34. The system of claim 25 in which the server mechanism includes an H.323 server.

35. The system of claim 25 in which the server mechanism includes a SIP server.

36. The system of claim 25 in which the user makes the VOIP call using a calling card and the information gathered by the gathering mechanism includes an identifier associated with the calling card.

37. The system of claim 25 in which the information includes a telephone number and the stored information includes an indication of telephone numbers that the user may ~~not call.~~

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